



The Fellowship of Saint John the Divine New England Region

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

New England Region Parish Life Conference - Minutes
June 25, 2004

- 1. Call meeting to Order at 10:47am**
- 2. Opening Prayer - The Lord's Prayer led by Fr. Michael Abdelahad**
- 3. Reports**
 - a. Secretary's Report from 03/20/04 meeting**

Because there currently isn't a secretary, this report was compiled by the Executive committee. This issue will be addressed in this meeting to find a replacement. There were no questions or comments about this report. The motion was made to accept the report by Fr. Joe Kimmitt, Fr. Leonard Farris seconded. Unanimously accepted.

- b. Treasurer's Report – Year End Report**

Nick Kourey reviewed the "Annual Budget," explaining certain line items. Motion made by David Franciosi to accept, Joe Samra seconded. Unanimously accepted.

- c. Budget Proposal for 2004-2005**

Nick reviewed the proposal. Dues will remain static. Shares of PLC increased. Intra-Regional support may increase by \$500 because of Theophany School. CA&W is probably a lower figure than expected. Discussion still needs to take place on this. Education deals with Footlamps. There is a separate budget that is forthcoming for the Footlamps project. Oratorical and Bible Bowl expenses are for traveling. Mary Winstanley O'Connor questioned the amount of the dues of each parish concerning the Bible Bowl.

The meeting was placed on hold when Bishop Joseph joined the meeting. He spoke on the Fellowship and shared how bringing all of our blessings and gifts together, more can be accomplished. The Fellowship is very important and should not be taken lightly. It is not a piece by piece setting, but a group that through God's help can continue to be successful. He stressed that we should not ignore history that has taught us about our faith, nor should we ignore the talents that God has given to all of us. The Fellowship has its vision, which is the backbone to keep our church holy and unbreakable. He then read a poem that was translated from Arabic and written by Metropolitan Sabab

The income should be \$800 higher so the dues would contribute to the Bible Bowl. Jamil said that they would look into this to make sure everything works properly.

Jamil asked for any additional questions. A request for a PLC report from last year was made. Jamil will be checking his records to give grant that request.

David Franciosi asked to add \$500 to Sacred Music. So granted.

Motion to accept the budget report for 2004-2005 by Linda Ayoub. Seconded by Mary Winstanley-O'Connor. Unanimously accepted.

4. Business

a. Antiochian Village Cabin Fund - Status report

Mary Winstanley-O'Connor said they were waiting for the checks from W. Roxbury and unfortunately held them for too long and so the checks expired. Now they are getting new checks, and they will be getting the program book now finished in the Fall. This ad book will raise about \$6,000 for the Antiochian Village. Jamil clarified that this project was originally for the cabin fund, but now will go to general expenses because Antiochian Village don't necessarily need cabin funds any longer.

b. Regional/Diocesan Calendar

Compiled a listing of events for each parish in the region so there aren't conflicting events. Jamil spoke about the Footlamps educational schedule and once the calendar is finalized it will be published to everyone. Jamil urged any parishes that hadn't submitted theirs to do so as soon as possible.

c. vonHolzhausen Lecture

Jamil indicated that as a region, they had given \$500 to sponsor. David Franciosi reported that about 80 people attended, and the entire evening was excellent.

d. Mission Statement forthcoming

Jamil indicated that although sometimes we don't know where we are going as a Fellowship, at the July meetings, on a National meeting, the NAC Fellowship will have a mission statement that will trickle down to the regional and local levels. Jamil stressed that it was important to hear ideas about what our mission should be and polled the group on what he can take to the national meeting.

e. Footlamps - Educational Workshop Series

Upon introduction of this topic, the group applauded. Sonia Daly spoke on compiling a schedule consisting of issues relating to families, young adults and other needs that we as Orthodox Christians should discuss. She then reviewed the calendar of events. She indicated that this was a draft but wanted to give the most current notice to

everyone at this meeting. If anyone has any concerns or suggestions, please contact Sonia. Fr. John Teebagy commended the executive committee on an excellent job and suggested that the deanery give a grant to take care of all expenses. He also suggested having a choir workshop and a Sunday School teacher's workshop. He stressed that we are so blessed in this region to have so many Orthodox resources and we need to take advantage of it. He requested that the executive committee write to Father Ed Hughes to see if the deanery will help with this expense. Jamil said that if after the pilot year this project becomes successful, that he would be working with the Marriage and Family department to make this a template for all regions. In addition, Jamil said that this would continue next year and have an additional set of workshops that deal with other ministries (ie. vocational, prison, mission). Fr. Dionysios Wilhelm expressed that a lot of these topics deal with young people, and he suggested having a topic dealing with the Orthodox perspective on death and dying.

Sonia stressed that communication is key to making this a success. She is counting on each parish to continue to keep those lines open at all times. Sonia said she will get parishes all of the information on the speaker, topic and dates well ahead of time.

5. Parish Reports

Jamil asked for questions and comments about the Fellowship on a local level and any updates. Joe Samra, OCF rep, said he just visited the teens and spoke to them on bridging the gap between the two groups. Joe also suggested taking notes from the teens and doing projects that they do such as OYO or humanitarian projects locally. Fr. John Teebagy suggested that the Teen SOYO regional president be apart of the executive committee.

- a. New Projects
- b. What works, what doesn't?

6. 2004-2005 Goals

- a. Better working relationship with other organizations
Jamil indicated that the relationships have steadily been increasing and getting stronger.
- b. Better internal communication with Fellowship groups in each parish
Jamil indicated that communication has been open and that he would be visiting the regional parishes a lot more often.
- c. Successful Education Program
Jamil indicated that the Footlamps program would be
- d. New Programs Developed

7. Appointments and Elections

- a. Regional Secretary
Jimmy Chalhub was nominated. Nomination was declined.
Gina Destito was nominated. Nomination was declined.
Joe Samra was nominated by Jimmy Chalhub. The nomination was seconded by Nick Kourey and accepted by Joe. Joe Samra will be the secretary for the NER for the remainder of the term
- b. Committees

Jamil spoke about how multiple committees could be condensed. These committees are as follows. Jamil and Sonia both said they were eager to have people involved because the executive board can't do this alone. They do keep status quo very well, but they would like to go above and beyond that. They can't always look at the same people in the room. Sonia asked for at least one member from each community to help with these projects.

- i. Parish Life Conference
Included AC&W festival, Oratorical, Bible Bowl
 - ii. Education/Spirituality
Christian Ed, FootLamps, Department of Sacred Music, St. Philip's prayer discipline
 - iii. Technology & Information
Website and email correspondence.
 - iv. Social Outreach
Humanitarian projects, mission trips
 - v. Missions (i.e. new churches in region)
2 missions in the region
 - vi. Social and Fellowship
 - vii. Long Range Planning
8. Final Thoughts
 9. Closing Prayer and Adjournment

Creative Arts

Mary Ann Kourey stressed there were two major issues: expenses and communication among directors.

The growing expense of the awards is because of the manner in which we are judging. We don't know how many awards they will be giving because they aren't simply giving 1st, 2nd and 3rd for each category. The first year they gave out awards and were criticized for their cheap quality. They thought they would make them nicer and the response was better. The committee decided that each participant should receive an award for participation. Fr. Michael Abdelahad indicated that the region as a whole only gets what they ask for. It is evident by past needs. So he expressed to the group to go back and share how the Fellowship is back in the limelight nationally and locally and that we need to light the fire again in our hearts about this. This will help when we ask people to help out.

Mary Ann was looking for suggestions on how to handle giving out awards. Sonia suggested for her to have three different scenarios as to how to handle giving out awards, the limitation of the awards.

Debbie Laham suggested adding a line to the registration form for sponsor.

Lack of response from the directors. Fr. Michael Abdelahad stressed that this was a one time glitch because from now on the directors will be reporting the judging immediately.

Parish Life Conference Report

Mary Winstanley O'Connor said that there are about 350 registered thus far. She suggested upping the amount of rooms from 50 on Thursday night and 100 on Friday and Saturday night. Mary then said that Bob Laham has this scheduled memorized by heart and will get it from him. She believes that St. George W. Roxbury is the host for 2006.

Scholarship committee needs to have new members because the terms have expired. The nominations are for Linda Ayoub, David Franciosi and Debbie Laham. The nominations were made by Khouriyee Anna Hughes and seconded by Fr. Michael Abdelahad. The nominations were accepted. Those three people will be the 2004-2005 scholarship committee.

William Ansara gave a brief presentation on the 2005 PLC sponsored by Sheraton Ferncroft in Danvers. June 24-27. Room rates will be \$95 plus tax. Features a senior championship 18 hole golf course and a 9 hole executive course. They have a health club, spa, Jacuzzi. William expressed that this is in a very developed area near Salem and 19 miles from Boston. Khouriyee Anna Hughes suggested when scheduling workshops, to not overlap as this has presented a conflict at the current conference and past ones.

Youth Program Report

The NER counsel of churches voted on developing a proposal for the youth director for the region. That proposal has been created and the executive board has asked Fr. Ed Hughes and Fr. Joe Purpura to visit each parish council to update them on the youth director. They are asking for money to help fund this proposal. Fr. Joe Purpura expressed how important a full time educated youth director and that it will make all the difference in the world.

The themes for next year's conference have been released. They can be viewed online.

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded at 12:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

NER Fellowship Executive Committee